REMARKS

In response to the Final Office Action mailed December 7, 2005, Applicant amended the specification and claims 12, 24 and 25. No new matter is added by this amendment. Claims 11-25 are pending.

Claims 24 and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Applicant has amended claims 24 and 25 to depend from claim 11, rather than from canceled claim 1. Accordingly, Applicant requests withdrawal of this rejection.

Claim 12 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The Examiner alleges that "the specification fails to identify and discuss any structural features and/or criticality of the now claimed 'circumferential recess … rectangular cross-section' of claim 12." Applicant has amended the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 18 of the application to make clear that the circumferential recess has a trapezoidal cross-sectional shape. In addition, Applicant has amended claim 12 to cover pressure control devices "wherein the circumferential recess has a trapezoidal cross-section." Support for these amendments is found, for example, in Fig. 1 of the application, where circumferential recess 22 is shown as having a trapezoidal cross-sectional shape. Accordingly, Applicant requests withdrawal of this rejection.

Claims 11-14, 19, 21, and 25 were rejected under either 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) or § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Alfons (U.S. Patent No. 5,285,931, "Alfons"). Applicant traverses.

Claim 11 covers pressure control devices that include a closing member "movable in a reciprocated manner between an upper extreme position and a lower extreme position … which extreme positions are defined by the width of a circumferential recess in [a] valve." Alfons does not disclose or suggest such devices. Instead, Alfons discloses devices where the cone angle of a peripheral groove defines the extreme positions. For example, in Figs. 3-5 of Alfons, the upper and lower extreme positions are defined by the cone angle of peripheral groove 17. If peripheral groove 17 had a smaller cone angle than the angle shown (for the same width of peripheral groove 17), the upper and lower extreme positions would differ, and rod 10 would have a smaller overall range of travel. In contrast, circumferential recess 22 in Applicant's specification has a

trapezoidal cross-sectional shape, and the upper and lower extreme positions in Applicant's pressure control device are determined by a width of the circumferential recess. Accordingly, Applicant requests withdrawal of the rejection of claim 11. Claims 12-14, 19, 21, and 25 each depend from claim 11, and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons as those outlined above in connection with claim 11. Therefore, Applicant further requests withdrawal of the rejection of these claims as well.

Claims 15-18 and 22-24 were rejected on the grounds of non-statutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-10 of van't Hoff (U.S. Patent No. 6,616,017, "van't Hoff"). Applicant traverses. Claims 15-18 and 22-24 depend from claim 11, and as discussed above, claim 11 covers pressure control devices for which "extreme positions are defined by the width of a circumferential recess in [a] valve." Claims 1-10 of van't Hoff do not include this limitation, and therefore claims 15-18 and 22-24 are patentably distinct from van't Hoff. Accordingly, Applicant requests withdrawal of this rejection.

Applicant believes the application is currently in condition for allowance, which action is requested.

Enclosed is a Petition for a three month extension of time and a Notice of Appeal, along with a check to cover the associated fees. Please apply any other charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 6/6/06

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